

SEQUENCE WITH UNIFORMITY

Nicole Yvonne Woodford, B.A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2002

APPROVED:

Robert L. Erdle, Major Professor

Don R. Schol, Committee Member and Associate

Dean School of Visual Arts

Jerry L. Austin, Committee Member and Chair,

Division of Studio Arts

D. Jack Davis, Dean of the School of Visual Arts

C. Neal Tate, Dean of the Robert B. Toulouse

School of Graduate Studies

Woodford, Nicole. *Sequence without Uniformity*. Master of Fine Arts (Drawing and Painting). August 2002. 13 pp., 9 figures.

The inspiration for my undergraduate body of work is derived from my fascination with Henri Matisse, Jacob Lawrence, and the Impressionists. I suddenly became captivated with the Impressionist movement and the independence of abstraction. I set into motion a series of paintings and drawings featuring random African-Americans and African society representatives in vibrant color and abstracting forms, and was specifically concerned with altering the form outside of the realistic area.

While in graduate school, I began to think about how the transformation from realism to abstraction combined with the conception of mortal to the immortal. I worked through ideas to see exactly where these views began, and where they would take me as an artist. Almost immediately I experimented with random figures found specifically in the N'debele culture in South Africa. In addition, I incorporated abstraction and expressive marks within the figure and slowly introduced cut paper, flat imagery and abstraction with the realistic figure. This became very challenging but I was determined to unite these ideas successfully.

More recently, my work has concentrated on the essential elements that have influenced my work as an artist, which recedes to childhood. The main elements most prevalent within the work is rhythm and space. I learned to use the musical rhythm as an instinctive reference point, as well as exploring issues of space and solid areas of flat color, thus I strived to unite all areas together to create an integrated composition.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my major professor Rob Erdle, and the support of my committee, Don Schol, and Jerry Austin for their leadership, time, and endurance.

In addition, I would like to thank my family and friends for their unyielding love, encouragement, and prayers.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
Chapter	
1. THE WORK	1
Statement of Problem	
Methodology	
2. ANALYSIS	4
3. CONCLUSION	8

## List of Figures

Figure 1 .....	9
Figure 2 .....	9
Figure 3 .....	10
Figure 4 .....	10
Figure 5 .....	11
Figure 6 .....	11
Figure 7 .....	12
Figure 8 .....	12
Figure 9 .....	13

## CHAPTER 1

### The Work

The inspiration for my undergraduate body of work is derived from my fascination with Henri Matisse, Jacob Lawrence, and the Impressionists. I suddenly became captivated with the Impressionist movement and the independence of abstraction. The Impressionist movement became an awakening of the freedom of abstraction and expressionism, which evidently became a fresh voice. I set into motion a series of paintings and drawings featuring random African-Americans and African society representatives in vibrant color and abstracting forms, and was specifically concerned with altering the form outside of the realistic area. In some African cultures the mask represents a transformation from realism to the spirit world and how the realism of the spirit would change form once entering the “spiritual realm”.

While in graduate school, I began to think about how the transformation from realism to abstraction combined with the conception of mortal to the immortal. I worked through ideas to see exactly where these views began, and where they would take me as an artist. Almost immediately I experimented with random figures found specifically in the N’debele culture in South Africa. In addition, I incorporated abstraction and expressive marks within the figure and slowly introduced cut paper, flat imagery and abstraction with the realistic figure. This became very challenging but I was determined to unite these ideas successfully. Upon examination the N’debele culture

influenced my work, the realization that the style and tradition of how they as a culture, paint ultimately this became similar to what innately was influenced by as an artist. They traditionally teach the mothers and daughters the technique. Coincidentally, my family has female artists and I began to think there was a connection with the culture, but realistically it only remained a coincidence.

After removing the figure entirely, and having focused on the expressive content within the work, the cut paper and vibrant colors remained, but the imagery remained solely non-objective. I began to layer paper, and experiment with different varieties of paper such as construction, papyrus, watercolor, and drawing paper. Soon, a sequence began to appear within the piece and I enjoyed the influence of color and rhythm within the composition. Many collages followed where color, balance and expressive gestural mark-making became dominant issues in developing the work. I strived to make the three concepts fuse, but was moved in the direction of how and what could be done with the expressive drip. I dealt with the idea of letting gravity help create the marks and wanted to observe where the paintings would evolve.

Subsequently, the next area of concentration was created from the concept of layering. Shortly after cut paper layering, the idea of layering turned out to be stimulating. I began to meditatively create drawings whereby text was written over text so that the text becomes illegible making the power of the words less effective, but the aesthetic of the negative and positive space a supplementary part of the subject matter. The paintings were transformed into a hypothesis of a surface of gestural marks with repeated expressive gestures over the field.

More recently, my work has concentrated on the essential elements that have influenced my work as an artist, which recedes to childhood. The main elements most prevalent within the work is rhythm and space. I learned to use the musical rhythm as an instinctive reference point, as well as exploring issues of space and solid areas of flat color, thus I strived to unite all areas together to create an integrated composition.

### Statement of Problem

The new exploration of rhythmic concepts and issues of space became important in relationship to the detail that has dominated my work. I created a series of paintings and drawings reflecting these themes. The work reflected the basic elements of space, abstraction, rhythm and mark-making. These paintings reflected the basic principles and concepts developed with the groundwork of art ideology; I would like the viewer to “hear” the visual music as well as feel the sensitive emotion that is projected. Therefore, the following questions were addressed and answered.

1. How can I merge space and rhythm successfully?
2. How does space function within the painting?
3. How does uniform sequence create spatial illusion?

### Methodology

Having created a body of work that has investigated the compositional aspects of balance, space, rhythm and flat areas of color, while exploring cultural influences. I wanted to create works on a variety of scale and material. Journal entries became a cornerstone and I was able to compare previous research experimentation to a comparison of my current pieces and the method of its planned development.



## CHAPTER 2

### ANALYSIS

There are several ways to portray spatial illusion within a painting, which many artists have investigated in two and three dimensional art structures. As a result, several methods have materialized. There are numerous approaches, for example: devices to show depth, scale, overlapping, transparency, vertical location, perspective and open and closed forms. The focus of the work primarily became a development of space in relation to variation in scale, overlapping and rhythmic spatial patterns.

I chose to represent rhythm in my work by the passage of the viewer's eye and how it progresses from corner to corner of the picture plane in a rhythmic way. However, rhythm in a design fundamental is found in repetition. Nevertheless, rhythm engrosses a clear recurrence of elements that develops into the same appearance but slightly modified. The concept is expanded in the background of the picture plane. In most paintings I chose to portray rhythm in an alternating rhythmic method. Here, gestured brushstrokes or patterning truly reflected a strong sense of sequence.

These two concepts of space and rhythm led me to ask these questions and approaches within my work.

#### 1. How can I merge space and rhythm successfully?

This question was proven by merging space and rhythm through a free experimentation of several materials, scale, methods and records. For example, the recent

body of work reflects an important emphasis on space and sequence by mark-making, shape, structure, overlapping, repetition, movement, and distinction with expressive line. This has a significance of chosen rhythmic freedom, so the result becomes the function that space plays.

Journal entry GNT-044 indicates while creating *Melody of the Heart*, rhythm and space merge successfully on the composition. Due to the use of expressive line, inventive shapes, tension, negative and positive space, as well as overlapping, the decision was made to use the resourcefulness of India ink and drawing paper. I identified with this technique and believed this process helped the composition become more meaningful and non-representational, but yet distinctively focused in its development. With the inspiration of *Melody of the Heart*, more pieces emerged by the same approach. *Song of the Spirit*, journal entry GNT-045, formed with pen, ink and paintbrush on drawing paper, demonstrated the same important weight on space and economy that became the groundwork in the drawing.

The painting *Earth's challenge to the Moon*, journal entry GNT-046, becomes the slight deviation but not a direct change from the thesis project. Here, there is a minor progression in the medium's approach where India ink, paper, acrylic paint and canvas are integrated on the surface. The procedure of the solid field of color remains within the work, but I have added actual texture and balanced the visual weight with line, space and rhythm of one area where the India Ink is expressively focused within and on the surface. In addition, there is a variety of textural and pronounced brushstrokes that add a sense of movement to the surface of the composition.

Space becomes the primary focus in the *Untitled* fibers piece, as well as the intentional use of another media, which became the prominent factor where cotton, immersion dye techniques, cold wax, acrylic paint, and raffia were used. With the variety, movement, confident mark-making, observation of intensity, hue, and the latest selection of media, the choice was made not to abandon the strong sense of space and rhythm throughout the piece and all ideas and inspirations were recorded in journal number GNT-047 for the development of the work.

It was found that the four acrylic paintings in a series, with the flat solid grounds, were transformed into their own voice and direction. These were: *Concord* 32" X 40", journal entry GNT-036, *Contemplation* 47" X 38", journal entry GNT-049, *Reliance* 47" X 38", journal entry GNT-050, and *Sin* 47" X 35", journal entry GNT-051. These paintings created the foundation of uniform space and rhythm. Traditionally, throughout each painting, the repetition of: line, shape, form, texture, and space formed a predictable patterning that developed into spatial illusion. In addition, the brushstrokes created a cultural reference to African cloths, prototypes, design elements, fibers and weaving. The confident lines reference space and its function within each composition. These works were the start of the successful mergence.

In *Kaleidoscopic Change*, journal entry GNT-052, this work has an expressive quality which fills and emerges from tradition with its flat ground, but changes with its variety of color and freedom of movement across the surface of the work. Shape became a compelling revelation for the piece. Organic shapes and biomorphic shapes hold the

painting together through the overlapping within the negative and positive areas, in addition to the successful sensation of interlocking shapes. Moreover, the painting has other areas that become more pronounced while overlapping, but the balance of pastel bright color balances the warm purple tones. This brings a sense of tension to the background which enables the piece to be balanced more effectively.

## 2. How does space function within the painting?

Essentially, space and rhythm became the most important theme in all nine paintings. The approach to space developed in two ways: first, by the intentional use of line and mark-making that emphasized perspective and overlapping. Second, by the rhythmic patterning that is created due to the use of the negative and positive space apparent in the composition. Each piece remains an individual composition and contains repetition, line (expressive line or bold), form and in some cases, variety and texture, with an emphasis on space. In all paintings, I successfully used space negatively and positively, in reference to perspective, scale, and overlapping shapes.

## 3. How does uniform sequence create spatial illusion?

In the thesis project, the balance of repetition pattern was located in the foreground of each piece, creating an illusionistic effect due to the negative and positive space created around and within the shapes. Line, form, tension, repetition, and movement were present in order to develop this illusionistic spatial effect. Brushstrokes that formed the shapes negatively and positively within the space of the patterned areas created a uniformed sequence that set up the development of spatial illusion.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSION

As an artist, I wanted to give a sensation of space in my work. In my thesis project, space turned out to be illusionistic for the non-objective images portrayed on canvas, paper, or fabric. The images, created consistently and deliberately continue to be essentially flat within my paintings. In the majority of the paintings and drawings there is no implication of depth with a flat patterning on the picture plane. Thus, I have found that variety in scale, line and overlapping helped define and characterize spatial illusion within the paintings and drawings.

Journal entries were applied within the development of this body of work, as well as approaching the basic elements of line, form, movement, space, texture, value, overlapping, color, and repetition in a variety of non-objective abstract forms.

Several methods and materials were chose in resolving the questions stated in the earlier chapters, which made this experimentation become more successful. The paintings have a great degree of tension, harmony, balance, uniformity and non-objective spatial illusion which created successful compositions.

It became obvious that there was a need to combine line and form in a repetitious and meaningful way in order to create the non-objective spatial illusion I am striving for in my work.

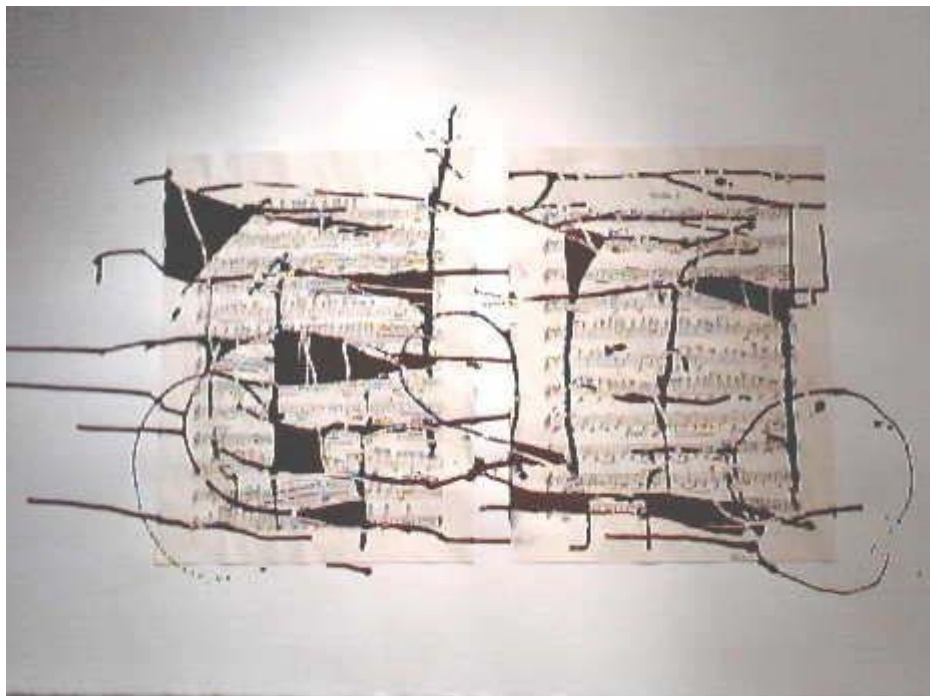


Figure 1

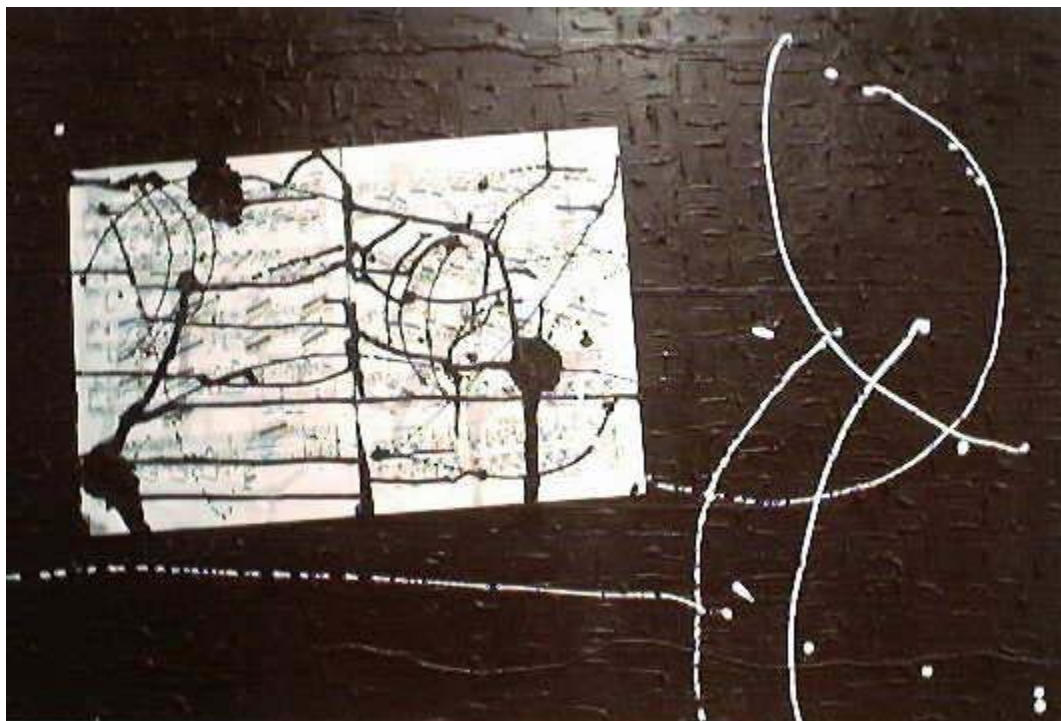


Figure 2

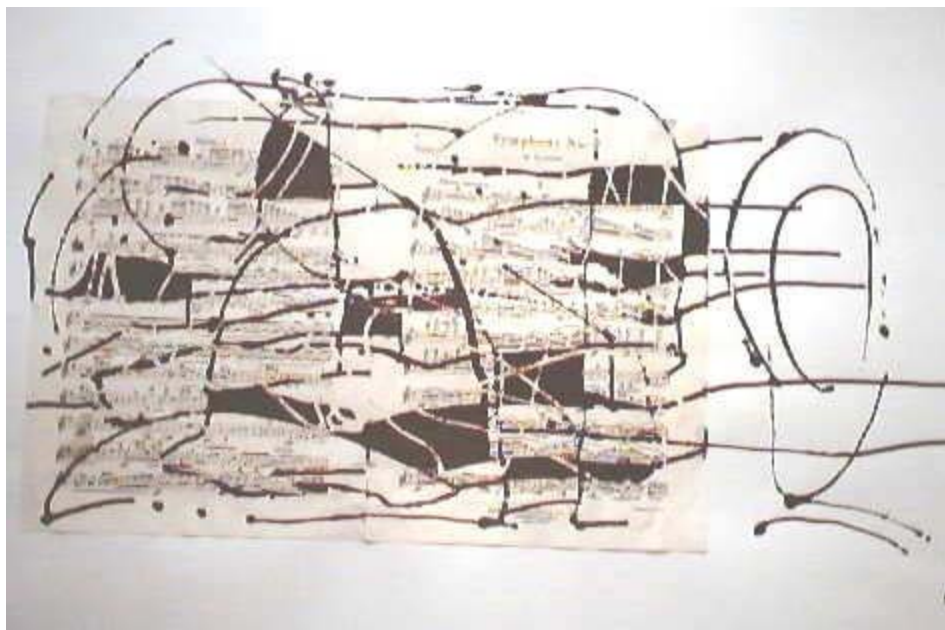


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

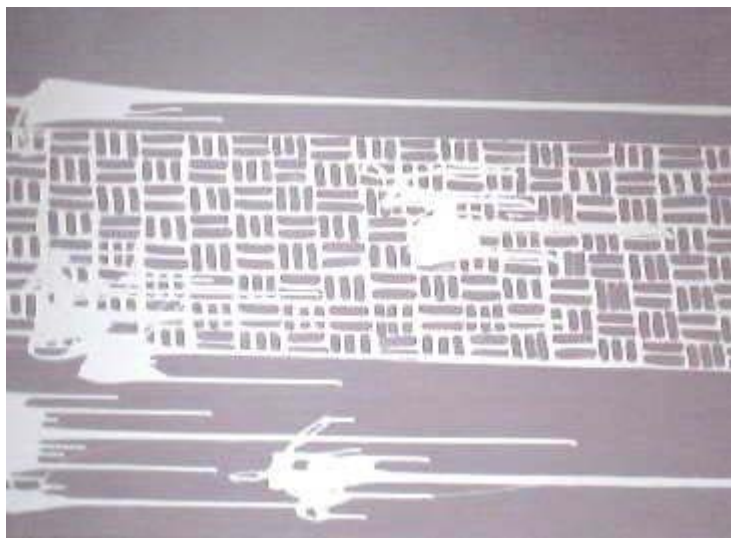


Figure 6



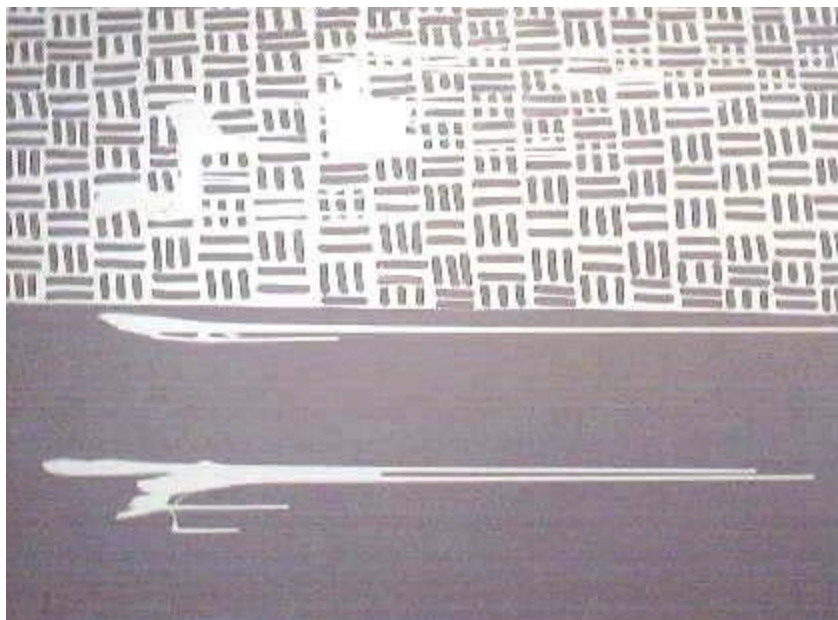


Figure 7

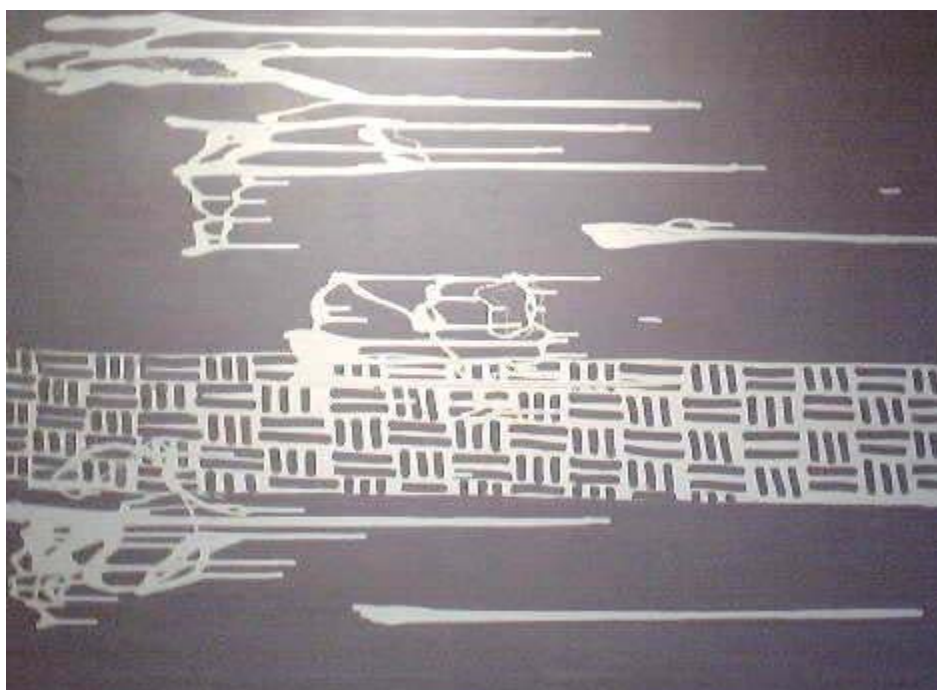


Figure 8



Figure 9